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INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 3974
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2419
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1493
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0907
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2096
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 6182
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4404
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2365
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
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SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - MAY 11

Leading Stories

1. The National Scholastic Test (SIMCE) shows a significant gap between private and public school students, which increases largely during the sophomore year. Dailies also report that pharmacy chains will have to stock 255 generic products, making them available to the public at all times.

U.S.-Related News

2. U.S. Ambassador Paul Simons said that the diplomacy Obama administration diplomacy toward Latin America shows the willingness of the United States to establish relationships "based on mutual respect." Simons strongly rebuts the view that the region is not one of Washington's priorities, stating that Vice President Joe Biden's recent visit to Chile, President Obama's participation in the Summit of the Americas and Obama's bilateral meetings with his Brazilian, Mexican and Canadian counterparts, plus Secretary Clinton's visit to Mexico, demonstrate otherwise. 3. "You cannot measure the interest of the United States in the region based on the number of front page articles in newspapers," said Simons. To make his point, the Ambassador highlighted that in his first 100 days, President Obama "has met with 44 foreign leaders, phoned 56, visited eight countries, and participated in four international summits, while Secretary Clinton has had 150 meetings with foreign leaders and visited 18 countries." The Ambassador said this "intense agenda shows the United States is willing to listen and to exert leadership, but in consultation with all its associates."

4. Simons also talked about his recent trip to California with Chilean Energy Minister Marcelo Tokman, noting the United States is focusing on renewable energy, and to Texas, for the signature of an agreement between the Texas National Guard and the Chilean Army for natural disaster operations (Interview with El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, circ. 129,000, 5/11).

5. It is well known that Chilean Arturo Valenzuela is a strong candidate for the office of Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs. But former Assistant Secretary Otto Reich says Valenzuela has a strong contender: Former U.S. Ambassador to Chile Craig Kelly (El Mercurio, 5/10).

6. Chilean Army Commander-in-Chief Oscar Izurieta was in Texas for the signature of a cooperation agreement between the Chilean Army and the Texas National Guard in security and defense capabilities, institutional social responsibility, and disaster response (La

Segunda, conservative, afternoon, circ. 33,000, 5/8).

Regional Affairs

¶17. Foreign Affairs Minister Mariano Fernandez recently traveled to Argentina and Brazil and met with his Cuban and Venezuelan counterparts in Havana. Next week he will travel to Colombia. Fernandez said the objective is to show that Chile's foreign policy priority is Latin America and regional integration (El Mercurio, 5/11).

¶18. The CEO of Chile's National Oil Company ENAP, Rodrigo Azocar, said the company will focus on investing in Egypt and Ecuador, and dismissed altogether investing in Venezuela (La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 5/9).

¶19. Three Chilean architects have an original idea to resolve Peru's border claim and Bolivia's maritime claims. They are proposing building a tunnel along the Chile-Peru border. The tunnel would begin in Bolivia and emerge past the Chilean coast on an artificial island build with the dirt removed to build the tunnel. Bolivia would have the control over the island, but the sea area to the continent would be administered by the three countries (La Tercera, 5/9).

Cuba

¶10. OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza said his goal is for Cuba to return to the Inter-American community. He said the United States should lift the embargo immediately with no conditions, in the belief that this action would help create democracy on the island (El Mostrador, on line news agency, 5/11).

ICC

¶11. The Senate will discuss "with extreme urgency" the Constitutional reform that would enable Chile to adhere to the International Criminal Court (ICC) statutes (La Tercera, 5/11).

Human Trafficking

¶12. Eight women from Paraguay were recruited via Internet by a Chilean to work as prostitutes. He paid for their tickets and they entered the country on a tourist visa. In their statements to the police they said they were fully aware of the job they would be performing (Las Ultimas Noticias, leading-circulation, popular, circ., 140,000, 5/11).

¶13. Minister Jose Antonio Viera-Gallo presented a summary of Chile's progress to the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva. Some council members criticized the excessive police force in some cases, called for equal treatment of indigenous peoples and the need to give women reproductive rights, among other topics (La Tercera, 5/9).

Local Politics

¶14. Fundacion Paz Ciudadana is organizing the first presidential debate on July 1, that will convoke Sebastian Pinera, Eduardo Frei, Marco Enriquez-Ominami, Alejandro Navarro, Jorge Arrate, and Adolfo Zaldivar (El Mercurio, 5/10).

Natural Disasters

¶15. The Llaima and Chaiten volcanoes in southern Chile are on yellow and red alert, respectively. The Llaima has continuous seismic activity, showing changes in its crater, and the Chaiten's dome continues to expand in width and height with a permanent column of ashes (La Tercera, 5/9).

Human Influenza

¶16. The AH1N1 flu is slowly appearing in all countries, and it is just a matter of time before the first case appears in Chile, said expert epidemiologist Fernando Oteiza (La Tercera, 5/9).

SIMONS